



Fig. 1. Difference in amplitude and harmonics of the A and B notes hypothesized to represent two different birds.

(Fig. 1). The duration of the first and third notes was also similar [mean and range, 0.39 (0.38-0.41) and 0.38 (0.32-0.42), respectively], while the middle note was nearly twice as long [mean and range, 0.71 (0.70-0.73)]. The intervals between the calls differ. The interval between the first and second calls was longer and more variable [0.55 (0.38-0.87)] than the interval between the second and third notes 0.17 (0.10-0.22)]. If both owls were vocalizing at about the same amplitude, then bird B was closer to the microphone. With this spatial arrangement, the only way the interval pattern described above can be generated is for the two owls to differ in their response time — owl A responding more rapidly to B's call than B responds to owl A. This circumstantial evidence for duetting in the Indian

horned owl remains to be verified by sight records of duetting birds.

The recording was examined by Dr Joe Marshall (ret. Fish & Wildlife Service) who identified the species as *Bubo nipalensis*, and who sent a copy of the recording to Dr John William Hardy (Florida State Museum, Gainesville). We thank Dr Marshall for his assistance.

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13. A GREY SHRIKE *LANIUS EXCUBITOR* LINNAEUS KILLING A FULL GROWN LITTLE BROWN DOVE *STREPTOPELIA SENEGALENSIS* (LINNAEUS)

On 15 March 1992, while walking along a forest path in Sariska Tiger Reserve, I saw a Little Brown Dove *Streptopelia senegalensis* feeding on the ground near some bushes. A Grey Shrike *Lanius excubitor* suddenly pounced on the dove and pinned it to the ground. I was not able to see, how the shrike held the dove, as the shrike partially covered the dove with its slightly spread-

out wings. The dove tried hard to get away, beating its wings desperately and rolling this way and that, to shake off the shrike's hold but the shrike tenaciously clung on to the dove.

Soon the dove stopped struggling. The shrike kept its hold for some more time and then started plucking the dove, looking up now and then. After plucking feathers for some time, the shrike

flew away leaving the prey back.

I waited for half an hour but the shrike did not return. No other predator or scavenger was seen. The feathers from the head, neck and breast had been plucked and there was a curved, incised, wound 8 mm x 1 mm on the back of the head. Apparently it had died from the head wound caused by the sharp beak of the shrike piercing the skull and injuring its brain. I left and returned after about two hours. The dead dove had disappeared.

Salim Ali and S. Dillon Ripley (HANDBOOK OF

THE BIRDS OF INDIA AND PAKISTAN, compact edition 1983, page 344) while describing the food of the grey shrike *Lanius excubitor* Linnaeus mention "young or sickly birds (full-grown lark and young Brahminy Myna recorded); known to attack a wounded sandgrouse." In this event the Grey Shrike caught and killed a full-grown, adult dove.

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14. RUFOUSBACKED SHRIKE (*LANIUS SCHACH* LINNE) FEEDING A STRIPED KEELBACK (*AMPHIESMA STOLATA*) TO CUCKOO (*CUCULUS CANORUS* LINNE) FLEDGELING

On the 22nd of September, 1991 while watching birds in the New Forest Campus in Dehra Dun I was attracted towards squeaking calls from the compound of a house. Closer observation revealed a young Cuckoo perched on the bare branch of a mango tree some 3 metres above the ground. The presence of a white nuchal spot helped in the identification of the Cuckoo as *Cuculus canorus*. The squeaking calls were feeding calls and in no time a Rufous-backed Shrike arrived and perched by the side of the Cuckoo fledgeling. The Cuckoo responded by increased squeaking, fluttering of wings, and opening the gape which was conspicuously orange on the inside. The shrike fed the Cuckoo fledgeling nearly twice its size with a small insect and flew off. After 3 minutes the shrike returned with a striped keelback about 25 cm long in its beak.

The Cuckoo fledgeling solicited with its usual zeal, and in no time the dead snake was passed on to it by its foster parent. The Cuckoo having a fairly long prey dangling from its beak behaved nervously, shook it many times and also tried to hit it on the branch. While doing so the snake fell from its beak into the tall grass. The Shrike which was watching the scene dived immediately to the ground and retrieved the snake. The Cuckoo once again dropped the snake. The shrike retrieved it again and offered it to the Cuckoo chick. After shaking it a little the Cuckoo started swallowing the snake head first and devoured it completely inside in two minutes.

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15. PHILIPPINE SHRIKE *LANIUS CRISTATUS LUCIONENSIS*, A REGULAR WINTER VISITOR TO SOUTH INDIA

The status of the Philippine shrike *Lanius cristatus lucionensis* in India had been stated by Ali and Ripley (1983) as a winter visitor to Andaman and Nicobar islands. It is recorded in Sri Lanka, but the status is not yet clearly known. However, they suggested that the population of this species occurring in Sri Lanka reaches through Andaman and Nicobar islands. Apart from Andaman and Nicobar islands it is also recorded from Kerala. At Point Calimere the occurrence of the Philippine shrike has been confirmed by ringing more than ten individuals during

October 1991. We believe that this species has been overlooked for many years, though it can be easily differentiated from the brown shrike *Lanius cristatus cristatus*. The differences in the plumage characters were taken as variation due to difference in age. The species was also recorded in Sriharikota island which is situated further north along the east coast (Mohapatra and Santharam 1992). It is evident from the number of birds of both the species ringed, that the population of the Philippine shrike wintering at Point Calimere is almost equal to that of the brown